

Joint Capital Planning Committee

March 23, 2017

First Floor Meeting Room

Members present: Douglas Slaughter, Chair, Connie Kruger, Phoebe Hazzard, Alex Lefebvre, Tamson Ely, Katherine Appy, Bernie Kubiak

Staff present: Claire McGinnis, Co-finance Director; Sonia Aldrich, Co-finance Director and Paul Bockelman, Town Manager

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Capital Planning Process

The Committee reviewed the capital planning process, many topics which came up in 2016 and 2017, summarized in memos from Peter Hechenbleikner on June 1, 2016.

- In addition to votes taken and described below, discussion covered many topics: Should the committee keep and publish a list of these topics, not just the annual published report but of known concerns?
- Should a pavement management plan be part of JCPC work and how would that overlap with Town Manager and Director of Public Works planning process already ongoing?
- How to document and include the capital spending and needs of enterprise funds, water, wastewater, solid waste and transportation?
- Continuing concern was expressed that items have been included (e.g., playground mulch, minor furniture) that are not actual “capital” items. General sense was that department heads should be advised not to include such items in next year’s capital plan, although there is an inherent subjectivity about the definition of “capital.”
- How to level playing field across departments as some are proficient and successful at requesting capital and others less so, but have worthy needs?
- Is “project” a singular, definable event or is implementation a reasonable parameter to add to the definition of capital item?
- Recognizing that there has been some migration of spending from operating to capital, how to support the Town Manager and Capital Plan in effort to migrate items back into operating budgets?
- Is there a way for JCPC to offer opinions to Community Preservation Act Committee on annual list of proposals earlier in the CPAC process? When? How? And is Finance Committee interested in similar involvement?

Motion to recommend to the Town Manager and the Finance Committee an amendment to the Town of Amherst Financial Management Policies and Objectives,

Part 3, to update the planning horizon for the Capital Plan to a ten (10) year capital plan and a nine (9) year projection, and Part 4, update to a ten (10) year capital improvement plan. Vote: 7-0 with 1 absence.

Motion to recommend to the Town Manager and the Finance Committee an amendment to Part 5 of the same document, letter a, replace the \$5,000 threshold for capital project cost with \$10,000. Vote: 7-0 with 1 absence.

Motion to recommend to the Town Manager and the Finance Committee an amendment to Part 1 of the same document, by adding a sentence to recommend that debt financing should only be used for expenditures in excess of \$100,000. Vote: 7-0 with 1 absence.

Minutes

There were no minutes of prior meetings available to approve.

Report to Town Meeting

Committee discussed important ideas to include in the text this year and decided to finalize the report following the referendum ballot question on elementary school construction scheduled for March 28th.

Meeting adjourned: 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire McGinnis

Documents discussed:

P. Hechenbleikner memo to JCPC of 6/1/16.

FY18 Draft JCPC Capital Plan, Revised and Balanced 3/8/17

3/20/17 email from M. Morris and S. Mangano relating to description of Fort River School Study capital item and scope of the item.

Prepared notes of Mr. Slaughter related to the text of the report.